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CONTENTS

5 | Rumble wins big at Sundance

17 | BOC/CREECO's Rusty Cheezo

10 | Tawich clothing showcases Cree hunting and fishing line

18 | New Métis community?

20 | Plans to improve food access in Eeyou Istchee

EDITORIAL
Crazy Valentines 4
NEWS
Power Chords 5
By the barrel of a gun 7
IN BRIEF 9
FEATURES
Gearing up 10
The economics of survival 17
Métis movement? 18
Making food affordable 20
REZ NOTES
No! You can't! 25
UTNS
Keep our elders with us 26

Happy Valentine's Day!

Editorial

Crazy Valentines

by Will Nicholls

I love Valentine's Day and all that it means. Of course it is named after Saint Valentine, the Patron Saint of betrothed couples, beekeepers, epilepsy, fainting, greetings, happy marriages, love, lovers, plague, travelers, and young people. His feast day is celebrated on February 14 and that is when we celebrate the love we have for someone special.

Throughout the years I have tried to take this to extremes. One time I had some good friends who had a band. We went to my girlfriend's workplace, set the band up along with a table complete with flowers, wine and a nice meal. The band played one of her favourite songs drawing her out of her office to see what the hell was going on. There am I with a goofy smile on my face. It was well received as her co-workers knew what was happening in advance and thought I was sweet.

Another time I had two friends carry me in a large box to my girlfriend's house in Chibougamau. I emerged from the box in a white tuxedo carrying a bottle of wine and two crystal flutes only to see the surprised face of my girlfriend's father, a sergeant in the local police force. He loved me for the gesture, though it didn't last long with his daughter.

One I always regretted not doing was my window-washing scheme. My plan was to be in a tuxedo and slowly dropped down to her floor. She worked with her back to the window. I would have a glass of champagne and a walkie-talkie in my hand. At the right moment a co-worker would hand her the walkie-talkie and a glass of bubbly and I would say, "Turn around, Happy Valentine's Day from your favourite fool." CBC was going to film this. While the window washing company was on board the building owners nixed it because of potential liabilities.

Having gotten older I am more sedate in my Valentine's Day offerings. I usually give flowers and that old standby candy. But every now and then I recite my wife a poem by Robert Browning. I have included it here because it says what I feel. In my mind, to express love is the highest good, a plan that's good for any day of the year.

"Summum Bonum"

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee:
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem:
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea:
Breath and bloom, shade and shine, wonder, wealth, and—how far above them—
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl,—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—all were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

The title is a Latin phrase that means the highest good.

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Left to Right: Alfonso Maiorana, Stevie Salas, George Clinton and Catherine Bainbridge

News

Power Chords

Rumble gets into the award rhythm at **Sundance Festival**

by Martin Siberok | Photos provided by Rezolution Pictures

When it comes to passing on the past, Indigenous cultures do it through storytelling. So it shouldn't come as a big surprise that the latest documentary by Montreal-based Rezolution Pictures would pick up a prize for doing just that.

After its world premiere at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival in January, *Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked The World* walked way with the Special Jury Award for Masterful Storytelling in the World Cinema Documentary category.

And what a story it is! Written by co-directors Catherine Bainbridge and Alfonso Maiorana, Rumble explores the unheralded contributions of Indigenous Americans in shaping popular songs by focussing on the contributions of well-known musicians whose ancestral heritage helped influence the direction of popular music.

"We were so honoured," exclaimed Bainbridge, "not only be selected to screen the film at Sundance, but to walk away with an award. You have to realize that only 12 films out of nearly 2000 are selected in the world documentary category. So just be able to attend was incredible enough.

"And the award for storytelling is an acknowledgement of the whole team involved in this project. Everyone – be they cinematographers, editors, writers, researchers, sound people, interviewees, even the artists themselves – are all storytellers. So the award is a recognition of everybody's contribution."

Covering over a century of music, Rumble introduces artists whose Native past filtered through their rhythms, their drumming or their vocal phrasing into different genres of music – be it the blues, jazz, folk, rock or heavy metal.

The list is impressive and includes 1920s Delta bluesman Charley Patton, Mildred Bailey a.k.a. the "Queen of Swing", folk legend Buffy Sainte-Marie, guitar hero Jimi Hendrix, Band guitarist Robbie Robertson, and metal drummer Randy Castillo.

For Muscogee writer, musician and activist Joy Harjo, the reason that Native Americans have gone unrecognized for so long was a conscious decision. "Indigenous people being left out of the story of music, of course has everything to do with the land," Harjo said. "It has to do with the way of imagining the American Dream, which was a land cleared of Indigenous people."

As the film infers, the last wave of free American Indian singers were the Ghost Dancers in the late 19th century, before the US government brutally suppressed this cultural voice in a wave of violence that culminated with the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890.

Rumble takes its title from guitarist Link Wray's infamous 1958 instrumental that was banned from certain radio markets for its menacing opening power chord and use of distortion and feedback. With youth culture burgeoning, the authorities feared it would incite teen violence. Despite its notoriety, Wray's song became the definitive sound that influenced all future rock guitarists.

Though every rock aficionado knew about Wray, few realized he was a Shawnee from North Carolina – a fact that even Wray kept hidden. This became the modus operandi for most musicians with Aboriginal ancestry.

Guitarist and songwriter Robbie Robertson, best known for his role in The Band, spent much time as child with his mother's family on the Six Nations Reserve, near Brantford, Ontario. From an early age, he remembers the phrase: "Be proud you are an Indian, but be careful who you tell."

In Rumble, Bainbridge and Maiorana have assembled an impressive list of interviewees. Besides musicians, including Tony Bennett, Taj Mahal, Iggy Pop, Slash, Stevie Van Zandt and Jackson Browne, they also spoke to filmmaker

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Justice and Correctional Services
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Enquête auprès des peuples autochtones

Participation à l'activité économique

Une enquête menée auprès des Premières Nations vivant hors réserve, des Métis et des Inuits

Between January and June 2017, Statistics Canada will be conducting the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS). You may be selected to participate.

Take part, complete the survey and help build a better future!

For more information, call 1-800-263-1136 or go to www.statcan.gc.ca/aps.

Entre janvier et juin 2017, Statistique Canada mènera l'Enquête auprès des peuples autochtones (EAPA). Vous pourriez être sélectionné pour y participer.

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In Brief

Wahstauskun **Journey of Hope**

A group of walkers left Whapmagoostui on snowshoes February 8, kicking off a journey to show support for people battling cancer and raise awareness of the disease in Indigenous communities.

The Wahstauskun Winter Journey of Hope, on Facebook as @wahstauskun, was sent off by Elders and locals from the Samson Dick Memorial Sports Complex with plans to stop at a few camps on their way to Chisasibi.

The walkers' ultimate destination is Ottawa. Anyone looking to support them on their journey can contact Wahstauskun coordinator Larry Wapachee at 819 929-3384 or by email at larry-wapachee95@outlook.com.

Study: First Nations struggle to access health care

A recent study published by the Canadian Medical Association Journal argues that Indigenous Canadians still face serious barriers to accessing quality health care – largely due to the legacy of residential schools that created segregated hospitals and the attitudes of certain healthcare practitioners.

Titled "Health care experiences of Indigenous people living with type 2 diabetes in Canada," the study involved focus groups and interviews in five First Nations communities across the country. Researchers examined diabetes treatment to analyze markers of social health and the continued impacts of colonization and the role they play in increasing chronic disease numbers in Aboriginal communities.

Four major themes that emerged were the colonial legacy of health care, the perpetuation of inequalities, structural barriers to care (confusion over whether provinces or the federal government should pay), and the role of the relationship with healthcare providers in mitigating harm.

Sometimes Indigenous patients lack the means to follow the instructions given to them by dieticians and physicians and a consistent theme of the study was Indigenous people's inherent mistrust in the healthcare system.

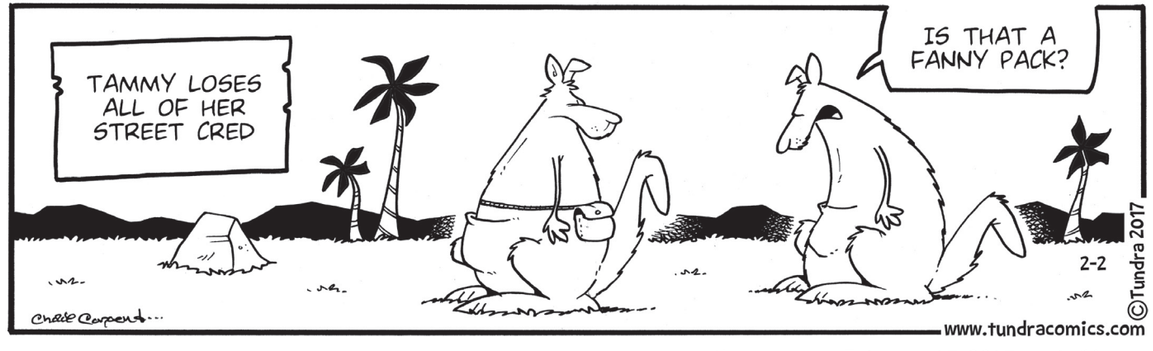
"The institutions of healthcare services arise from a dominant society," said Dr. Lindsay Crowshoe, a family doctor and associate professor in family medicine at the University of Calgary. "Those can be experienced in a very negative way [by Indigenous people]."

MMIW inquiry **to exclude men**

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women has decided not to include Indigenous men. However, it will look at the ways that violence against men emphasizes what has happened to women. Some critics said the homicide rate for Aboriginal males is three times the rate for Aboriginal women. In many cases crimes involving Aboriginal men are less likely to be solved.

The lead lawyer for the commission Susan Vella said the experiences of women and girls will remain the central issue when testimony from family members, survivors and communities begins this spring. However, the inquiry could listen to testimony from Indigenous males in order to understand whether their circumstances contribute to the "vulnerabilities" of women and girls.

Some chiefs, such as Chief Ernie Crey of Cheam First Nation in British Columbia, have created a group called Expand the Inquiry that wants men to be included. "We won't see another inquiry like this probably for another generation, if ever," Crey said. "You end up with half a picture if you don't address the issue of men and boys."



GEARING UP

Tawich Clothing expands into hunting and fishing apparel with new product licenses

by Joshua Grant | Photos provided by Jeremy Brown

When *the Nation* first spoke with Bruno Pereira of Tawich Clothing in January 2015 he was selling safety clothing to Goldcorp and making plans to expand the Tawich apparel line based out of Wemindji. Fast-forward to February 2017 and now he is showcasing a full line-up of top quality hunting and fishing gear.

The Nation caught up with Pereira February 3 at the Quebec Outfitters Hunting and Fishing Show in Laval, where he was displaying camo jackets and pants, compression shirts, boots and a brand new line of women's gear, all designed to meet the rigours of life in the north.

Pereira (President and CEO) and his colleague Jeremy Brown (director of operations) brought *the Nation* up to speed on how the Tawich product line has evolved and what the company has planned in the near future.

"Safety gear was the big thing in 2015," said Pereira. "Then we ventured into the distribution of industrial and automotive parts. We became the exclusive distributors of CCM and Reebok in the James Bay and also of Acacia Sports for broomball equipment. We really tried to facilitate the supply of those key items that everybody wants on the territory."

The company works out of the new Tawich office building in Wemindji and also has a 25,000 square-foot warehouse near La Grande airport outside Radisson. Securing a license

Summum models sport Tawich clothing at a fashion show organized by the Quebec Outfitters Association

*"**The root of the company** is to bring high quality products to hunters and trappers in the James Bay and to have a sharing of knowledge and job creation in the region."*

- Jeremy Brown

from Realtree camo for their hunting gear instantly put Tawich Clothing on par with major companies like Browning, Cabela's, Under Armour and Easton.

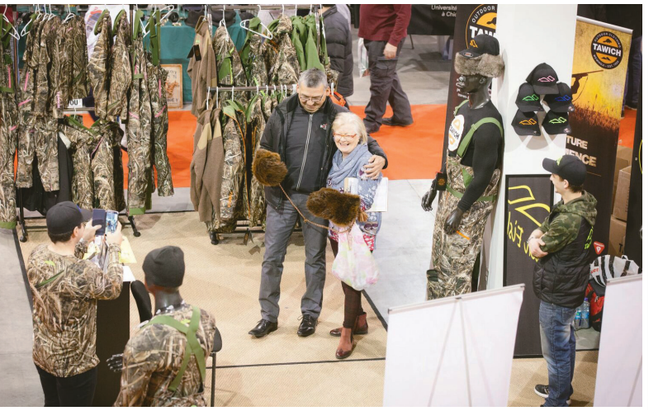
"We had good factories and good products but we needed licenses," said Pereira. "The key element of the hunting clothing line was the Realtree camo. It's easily the top industry standard for camo patterns."

When Pereira first contacted the Realtree office in Georgia to pitch Tawich for a license, he was shut down immediately. The American company said it already had enough licensed companies and to license any more would hurt the other brands. But Pereira wasn't ready to give up.

"I decided to prepare a nice PowerPoint, explaining the uniqueness of Wemindji and the community, what we're trying to do [at Tawich] and why we deserve a license," he said. "I sent the PowerPoint, had a couple of conference calls with them and then there was a waiting game for about three months."

Realtree eventually called him back. "They said, 'Bruno, you convinced us. We're giving you the license Canada-wide for stores and worldwide for online.' That was a big day of celebration at the office!"

When Pereira first contacted the Realtree office in Georgia to pitch Tawich for a license, **he was shut down immediately.**



***"Eventually they called me back** and said, 'Bruno, you convinced us. We're giving you the license."*

After securing the Realtree license Tawich was also able to get a license for Primaloft, the "buzzword" for water resistant, synthetic insulation that was originally developed for the U.S. Army.

"We want the best in every aspect of our garments so we went for Primaloft as well," Pereira explained. "The fact that we already had the blessing of Realtree gave us some leverage and once we had all the supply elements settled we launched our first [hunting and fishing] production."

Pereira and Brown emphasized that their main goal is to bring high quality hunting and fishing gear to those in the James Bay who need it the most. They worked hand in hand with the Cree Trappers Association when designing their hunting and fishing products.

"We want to be able to supply and guarantee a top-quality product and gear up authentic hunters and fishers," said Pereira.

"We got feedback and input from Cree hunters and trappers and basi-

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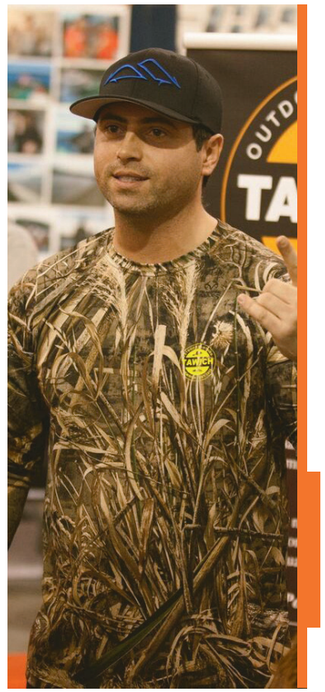

cally created our products for them, according to their specifications," noted Brown.

Stephanie Jonah was onsite working the Tawich booth. She gave specific examples of how Tawich clothing is perfect for life in the bush: quiet material that won't scare away prey, pants that allow for full mobility when working low to the ground, rubber boots that open from the side and are reinforced around the ankles and other areas that often crack due to wear and tear.

"We always try to get the best quality and if we can, improve on it, bring it back to the way it was done before," Pereira said. "Because we have direct access to our factories we don't mind investing a little bit more. We can guarantee our product quality and in the end we know the customer will always be satisfied."

As Tawich Clothing starts to garner attention outside of the James Bay region, they insist that equipping the hunters and trappers of Eeyou Istchee is still their primary focus. They hope to be a model for a sustainable Cree economy, equipping their employees with universal skills.

Currently Tawich is looking at giving exclusivity of their products to potential retailers in Cree communities and working with non-profit organizations like the Cree Trappers Association to equip Crees at wholesale prices.

"One of the key elements of building the company the way we have is to make sure that we can be competitive in a way that allows us to help other associations," said Pereira. "The Trappers Association is a non-profit organization that gets grants to help their members buy their equipment. We work closely with them to have a target price that's affordable and ensures their members are well equipped."

"We are definitely looking to distribute and we would like already established retailers to be buying from us," Brown added. "But the root of the company is to bring high-quality products to hunters and trappers in the James Bay and to have a sharing of knowledge and job creation in the region."

Pereira and Brown shared plans for a new store in Wemindji and said the company is looking to hire an additional three employees in the coming months after already expanding from three to ten-employees in the past year. Check out Tawich's full line of hunting and fishing gear at tawichclothing.com

Pereira and Brown shared plans for a **new store in Wemindji** and said the company is looking to **hire an additional three employees** in the coming months.

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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

JOB POSTINGS ᐊᐱᐊᓂᔨᐊᓐᐦᐃᑦ

PPRO Emergency Measures/
Department of Services Planning and Programming

Description: Conducts research activities that are necessary for identifying and assessing needs and resources. Designs and proposes development plans and programs. Provides advice concerning the implementation or improvement of programs and/or services. Participates in developing, planning, organizing and delivering emergency preparedness programs in accordance with Acts respecting Pre-Hospital Emergency Services, Civil Protection and Health services and social services.

- Bachelor Degree in health and or Social Science, health administration or another appropriate discipline;
- Knowledge of Quebec's legal and administrative environment related to civil security and pre-hospital services
- Good knowledge of the MHSSQ network, Quebec Civil Protection network and Cree Civil Protection entities, and;
- Civil Protection programs and approaches;

Work location: Mistissini

Responsible of Midwifery Services

Description: The Responsible of Midwifery services will work in a multidisciplinary manner with the other actors involved in existing perinatal services in order to develop the protocols of care and the technical and human resources necessary. She will also monitor and control the quality of actions taken by the midwives for the institution. Also, she will monitor pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal care up to 6 weeks for the mother and newborn. She will participate in education and health promotion activities and in the training of the various people involved in perinatal care.

Work location: Chisasibi

Other Available Jobs

Administrative Officer (Medical Secretary), Pharmacist, Clinical Nurse.

PPRO Chronic Diseases / Public Health

Description: Conducts research activities that are necessary for identifying and assessing needs and resources. Designs and proposes development plans and programs provides advice concerning the implementation or improvement of programs and/or services.

- Bachelor's degree in Social Science, or another appropriate discipline, or an equivalent level of relevant experience
- Experience in chronic disease management and diabetes is an asset;

Work location: Mistissini

Administrative Technician

Description: Person who performs work related to personnel management, financial management, work organization and planning for the execution of complex administrative tasks by compiling and analyzing data.

This job title also includes the person who is responsible for the administrative operation of a department and who oversees the department's internal and external relations.

Work location: All communities

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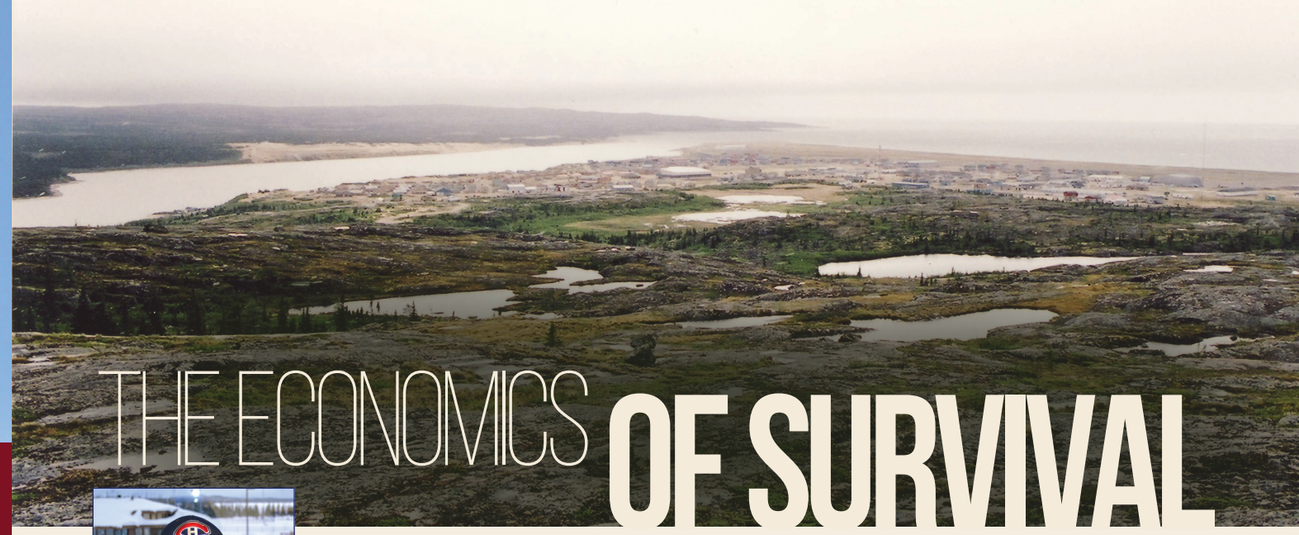

THE ECONOMICS OF SURVIVAL

Re-elected Chairman of the Board of Compensation/CREECO **Rusty Cheezo speaks to *the Nation***

The Nation (TN): Congratulations on once again being elected as Chairman of the BOC and President of CREECO. This is the second time you will fill this position, how have things changed since you served as Chairman of BOC/CreeCo from 2004 to 2006?

Rusty Cheezo (RC): Ten years have come and gone, one always likes to think that progressive improvements have happened during those ten years. Even when overall BOC-CREECO operations have been going very well, we can always find ways to do even better.

TN: What are the key roles and responsibilities you will have as chairman?

RC: With the support of the members of the Board of Directors on the Board of Compensation and CREECO, lead the BOC-CREECO teams in the service of and for the benefit of the Cree Nation by maximizing the returns of our investment portfolio and maintaining a high level of profitability for CREECO and its subsidiaries. We hope to provide meaningful employment opportunities for Cree beneficiaries who wish to work for CREECO subsidiaries.

TN: Do you have any specific goals you hope to accomplish in the next two years?

RC: Cree Nation unity in business is crucial for the enhancement and maximization of socio-economic development opportunities for all Cree communities. In politics the Cree Nation puts into practice unity and are there any justifiable reasons why the Cree Nation shouldn't put into practice doing business together? Leave politics to the politicians and leave business to the business minds of the Cree Nation.

Eeyou Istchee, Eeyou-Eenou Eethoun and Eeyou-Eenou Yeh-Moon are all integral components of our Cree identity as Eeyouch. Maintaining, strengthening and preserving our Eeyou Yeh-Moon should and must be kept in the forefront of our aspirations as a Cree Nation. BOC-CREECO as a Cree entity can play a leading role in promoting and preserving our Cree language by adopting and implementing such a policy.

TN: What are the major projects the BOC and CREECO will be working on in the near future?

RC: CREECO and its subsidiaries just recently undertook a planning session and with the guidance of Dr. Marie Delorme, and the CREECO Board of Directors in close collaboration with the key personnel of the subsidiaries formulated a plan for CREECO and its subsidiaries. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the participants of the planning session. The Board of Directors of CREECO and all it subsidiaries will now have to give the plan their blessings then CREECO and its subsidiaries will have their marching orders to put the plan into action. The plan covers the full spectrum of operations for CREECO and its subs.

TN: How can the people of Eeyou Istchee stay informed on the BOC/ CREECO or be involved in projects and the companies they support?

RC: One must want to get informed and get involved in what's happening in Eeyou Istchee and with the Cree Nation. Ask the appropriate questions, I have told some people, just ask, the worst you can get is a no. Another thing that I have also said is, "if I don't know the answer, I will get you the answer."

On behalf of BOC-CREECO it is our pleasure to represent the Cree Nation and of course, with the support of all of the community representatives. It is our hope that we can serve to the best of our abilities and instil pride within the Cree Nation.

Métis movement?

Chibougamau man discovers Aboriginal DNA, **demands status**

by Dan Isaac

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Luc Michaud

Luc Michaud admits he was surprised when he discovered a Métis ancestor through a DNA test provided by Toronto Company Accu-Metrics. "My Grandmother had Native blood but I couldn't find any information on my family tree," said Michaud. "People were a little scared to talk about Native blood back then."

Since the discovery, Michaud has been actively involved in establishing a Métis Society in Chibougamu. "We were approached by the Confederation of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada's Grand Chief Guillaume Carle to start a community," Michaud told *the Nation*. "So I said okay, let's se what's going on."

The Confederation of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada is the same political group associated with the Mikinaks, a group of non-status people who offer membership and issue cards to people who can prove they have at least 1 Indigenous ancestor, and pay an $80 fee.

Their "Status Cards," though not recognized by the Canadian Government read: "This card attests that the bearer is an Aboriginal within the meaning of the article 35 of the Constitution Act of Canada (1982) and can exercise applicable Aboriginal rights." The card goes on to list these rights that include fishing, hunting, and trapping.

The Mikinaks have had their intentions questions by Indigenous Leaders who believe their motives aren't grounded in recognition and re-discovery of their roots but rather in certain benefits and privileges attached to being a Status Indian.

In July 2016 Michaud's society held their first meeting. According to him, about 30 people attended and, "that's where I was first elected as the chief." Since then, the group has grown to over 350 members and held its grand assembly December 1.

Michaud's group has been working with Accu Metrics directly to help people who think they may have Métis Ancestry. "A lot were surprised, and a lot were proud when they got their results back," said Michaud. "The Majority of the people in Chibougamau are finding out they come from Lake St Jean. I think Lake St Jean is one of the places that has the most Métis people around."

Michaud believes the Daniels Decision, a recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling that classifies non-status and Métis as Indians, has a lot to do with the uptick in membership. "We do see an advantage for us," said Michaud. And while the ruling is promising for Métis, attaining Indigenous rights will still need to be negotiated and, in many cases, fought for.

"Our first priority is to be recognized as a community by the Government but there's nothing that will come about without negotiations," said Michaud. "I want 100 percent collaboration with the Cree. I think it will bring us closer and build bridges. I don't want to take anything away. I think we can work together and get a lot more."

In the near future, Michaud plans to meet with federal and provincial governments as well as Indigenous leadership. "We're going to try and meet with our representative Romeo Saganash on the Federal side and I've made informal contact with some of the Cree," said Michaud. "I think it's going to be a big challenge but you have to start somewhere."

Michaud also commented on the importance of expanding fishing and hunting rights for his community. "We wouldn't be in Chibougamau if we didn't like fishing and hunting," said Michaud. "I live on a lake and I have trouble fishing in the lake with the new laws. In the last 50 years the government has been coming in and closing us up."

"But even before the fishing and hunting, it's jobs. People who live here want to work here," Michaud exclaimed. "The mining companies have fly in fly out workers. They come in here, they take the jobs away from us, and they don't even have to pay parking. Jobs will be a very important part of my negotiations once we're recognized."

"I'm still trying to understand the whole thing myself around being Métis," said Michaud in closing. "It's completely new to me and I'm very, very proud of it."

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FIRST NATIONS BANK OF CANADA

What Cree authorities are doing to **make healthy food more accessible**

by Amy German
Photos by Tatiana Philiptchenko/CBHSSJB

With a large family to feed, Deputy Grand Chief Rodney Mark is no stranger to the soaring cost of food in Eeyou Istchee. Now he has the statistics to prove how much more the James Bay Cree are paying to feed themselves. The Cree Nation Government (CNG) and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB) have just published a study which shows, outside of the Arctic, that residents of Eeyou Istchee pay significantly more for their groceries than anywhere else in Canada.

Presented to the CNG Board Council meeting on January 24, the study shows that, on average, it can cost a family of four living in poverty up to 75% of their income to put healthy food on the table for everyone. What many end up doing is buying more affordable processed foods that are high in fat, salt, sugar and carbohydrates.

Mark says the game plan is to meet with each community's chief and council to present the report, then develop a working team at a local level with CNG and CBHSSJB reps. The idea is to present the general framework for action by improving access to nutrition food in Eeyou Istchee.

"Greater access to healthier food is going to be a challenge as this will involve commitment and cooperation with local grocery stores," said Mark. "To do this we would need to meet development corporations and stores to discuss how this can be achieved."

Mark said that an educational awareness campaign will roll out over the coming weeks. As March is designated Nutrition Month by the Dietitians of Canada, Mark and nutritionist Chantal Vinet-Lanouette will be conducting radio interviews on the importance of healthy eating. There are also upcoming community meetings on the subject in Chisasibi, Waskaganish, Eastman and Oujé-Bougoumou.

During those meetings, Mark said he will thoroughly explain the implications of a poor diet when it comes to chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and also heart and lung diseases.

According to Mark, the campaign is being well received and the chiefs of the communities are motivated to address the issue.

"Our stats on diabetes are extremely alarming and I believe we are all affected by having diabetes or knowing someone who has it," said Mark. "It is my hope people take this seriously and take action to promote healthy eating and of course exercise. We would like to establish affordable prices for healthy foods at local level. Each community has a nutritionist so we plan to work with them and a rep at the local level."

Making Food **Affordable**

It can cost a family of four living in poverty **up 75 percent** of their income to put healthy food on the table for everyone

After looking at the data, *the Nation* asked Chair Bella Moses Petawabano a few questions.

The Nation (TN): With statistics as damning as a projection of 40% of Crees being diabetic by 2030 and children as young as nine being diagnosed in 2016, what is the CBHSSJB's role in not only treating the people but preventing diabetes before it starts in the youth?

Bella Moses Petawabano (BMP): The Cree Health Board does much, much more than treat disease. The Cree Health Board works on prevention

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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Call to Action to Improve Access to Nutritious Food in Eeyou Istchee

In Eeyou Istchee, a large number of people live in food insecurity or are affected by diabetes. Moreover, availability of basic nutritious foods is limited and the cost of food is higher than in other regions of Quebec. To address these issues, the CBHSSJB and the Cree Nation Government have developed the Framework for Action to Improve Access to Nutritious Food in Eeyou Istchee. On January 24th, 2017, the Cree Nation Government adopted the Framework and committed to it through a resolution, and issued the following Call to Action:

Since the contribution of multiple stakeholders is essential to improve availability and affordability of nutritious food for the families, the CNG and CBHSSJB hereby call upon:

- Their own departments, boards, councils, committees, working groups and employees to be models for other entities and lead by example, by promoting health and improving access to affordable nutritious foods in all their meetings, conferences, activities and interventions;

- The local Bands, the development corporations, the local and regional businesses and associations, the Cree School Board and the schools, the daycares, and all other Cree entities to join forces and take immediate action to promote health and improve access to affordable nutritious food in their own sectors of intervention and activities;

- The suppliers and transportation companies to support and enhance the improvement of access to affordable nutritious food in Eeyou Istchee and ensure quality of food, from supply to distribution;

- The community members and their various local wellness committees to be actively involved in the improvement of their community food environment, to ensure availability of affordable nutritious food for all.

For more information visit www.creehealth.org/accessnutritiousfoods

For the health of our people,

Matthew Coon Come
Grand Chief
Grand Council of the Crees (of Eeyou Istchee)
Cree Nation Government

Bella M. Petawabano
Chairperson
Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

through awareness campaigns and working with local and regional partners to build healthy communities. In every community of Eeyou Istchee, our CHRs, nurses, nutritionists and other health workers carry out education activities in the schools and daycares, radio shows, campaigns like "Drop the Pop," breast-feeding promotion, cooking workshops, food tasting in the stores, and support for walking clubs, snowshoeing activities and local health conferences like the one held recently in Chisasibi, called "Masters of our Own Health." Many of these activities are geared towards children, youth and young parents.

You point to one of the important roles of the Cree Health Board, which is "surveillance" – keeping track of data on disease trends in our communities and sharing this data with the people and the leadership, so we can have informed decision-making. This is how we know that currently one adult out of four (25%) is living with diabetes in Eeyou Istchee. This is a very disturbing picture of our future as a Nation. In addition to surveillance, the Cree Health Board also carries out research when we need to understand more about a problem, which is why we compared the cost and availability of nutritious food in our communities with other parts of Quebec.

TN: If the Crees manage to mobilize to get cheaper food into Eeyou Istchee, how is the Health Board prepared to get people to eat it? Convenience foods are very popular in the communities; how would the Health Board work to get Crees to change their food habits?

BMP: We need to avoid blaming people for their choices when in some cases it is impossible to eat healthy in our communities and our children are surrounded by easy access to junk food. People know that poutine is not healthy. A big part of the problem is that fresh, good, healthy food is often not accessible and not affordable in our communities, especially for low-income families, many of which are headed by single mothers. This is what our research demonstrates. We need to make sure the healthy options are the convenient and affordable options, not the other way around.

Our patients often say it, and we have all experienced it. At many restaurants there is only unhealthy food and sugary drinks on the menu, or "healthy" options are a lot more expensive. We want to buy vegetables at the store but they are too expensive or not available. Parents complain that in some cases their children are being served fast foods at daycare or at school.

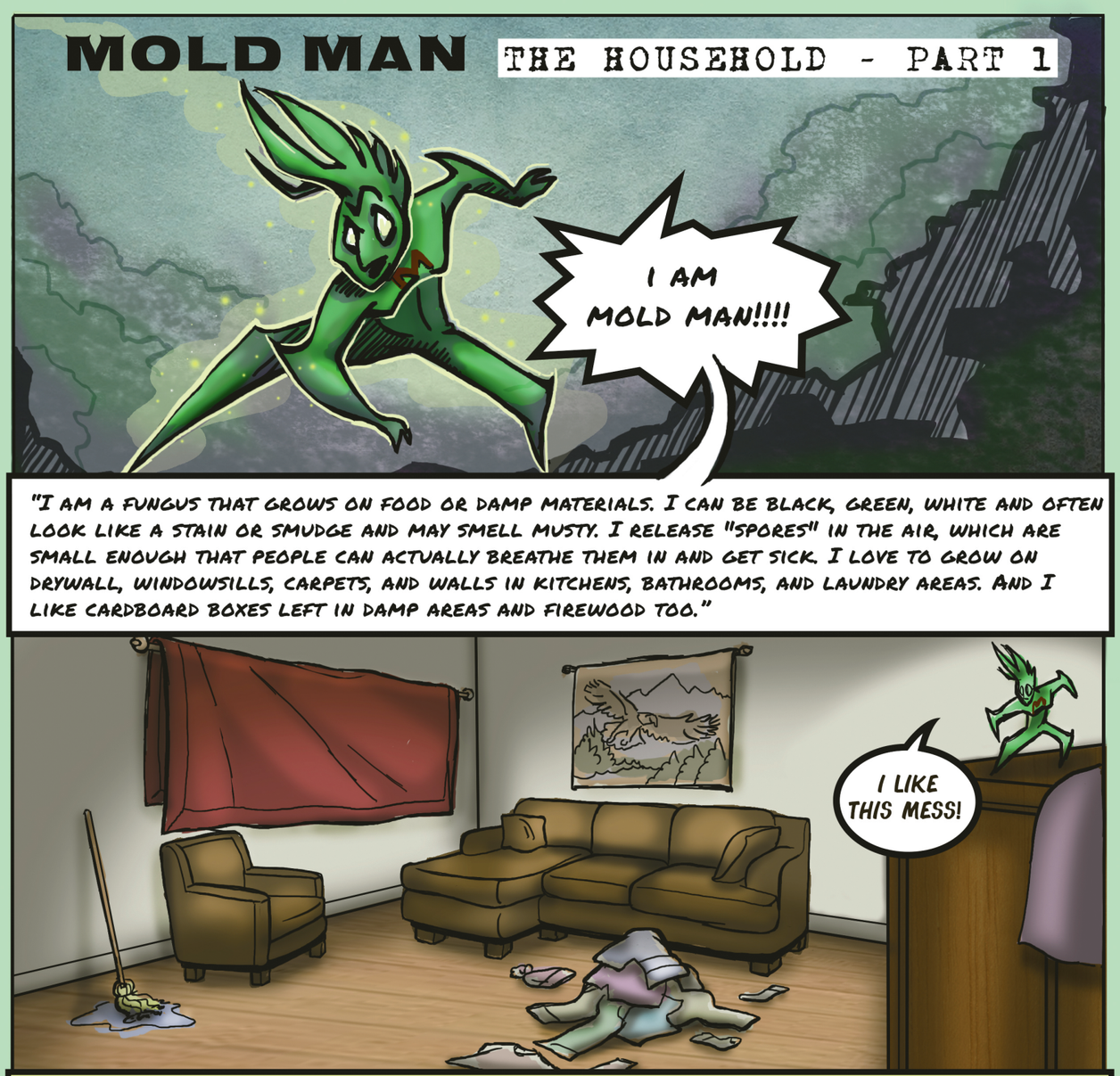
On our side, at the Cree Health Board we are going to continue doing what we have been doing, providing the best care we can to our patients and doing outreach and education. We will continue to work with community partners to help protect our environment, our drinking water, and to promote and improve access to traditional food. We will continue to monitor disease trends and carry out relevant research. We feel that these efforts will be stronger if all the other entities and our private sector partners are also mobilizing with us.

TN: What do you think is the most important aspect to creating change in the health of Crees?

BMP: We need a major, collaborative effort to address the chronic disease crisis in our Nation. This is the number one priority of the CBHSSJB. It is part of the new CBHSSJB Strategic Regional Plan. It was established as a priority by community members and stakeholders during the May 2016 Eeyou/Eenou Regional Assembly on Health and Social Services in Waskaganish. Improving access to nutritious foods in Eeyou Istchee is one of the most important things we can do to contribute to the prevention of chronic diseases.

TN: What has the public reaction been to the presentation?

BMP: Our presentation has brought a lot of interest. The comments of the chiefs and community representatives on the Framework for Action were really positive and supportive. We've had a lot of interest from the media. Our Cree media know how important this issue is. It touches people in their daily lives. All of us are aware that buying food is a daily struggle for many families.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I LIKE THIS MESS!
HOW CAN I AVOID MOLD?
• DO LAUNDRY FREQUENTLY. AVOID LEAVING PILES OF DAMP CLOTHING LYING AROUND.
• DO NOT USE BLANKETS ON WINDOWS. THEY CUT AERATION, AND WITHIN TWO YEARS, ROT WILL BE PRESENT.
• KEEP THE DOOR OF ROOMS OPEN AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE FOR VENTILATION.
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No! You can't!

by Sonny Orr

Rez Notes

Back in the day, parenting was a solemn duty to rear children who would one day make you proud. But this practice seems to be nearing some sort of event horizon. Sometimes, it feels that the child you raised is an unknown creature spawned from hell and then the following day, a perfect angel in disguise.

What's with the multiple personalities? I think it's a matter of growing up and gaining maturity at an exponential rate. When we were five years old, snot was allowed to be blown off our shirt collars. But today, it's quickly tucked away in some probiotic-drenched and damp cloth thinly disguised as a tissue and discarded in the nearest bin covered in outlines of needles and other bodily waste containers. Ahhh, the days when spitting on the sidewalk was actually a manly deed.

Today, parenting seems to involve quite a number of people besides the parents. It starts with a group of people at a fun party and nine months later, voila, parenthood. Then the grandparents kick in on both sides to woo and coo over your child until it's old enough to start opening cupboards and playing with your dangerous knife collection. Then a bus driver and bus monitor stop by to pick up your little loved ones and drop them off at a daycare, where institutionalized love and care take over while you and your colleagues slog away for the money to support you and the kid(s). The daycare soon transforms into a school where a larger institution awaits to keep your kids' minds sharp for the next decades. In that period, hundreds of people have access to your child's life and contribute to their growth.

Take for example, a guy like Donald Trump, who apparently was driven pretty hard by his hard-working parents, especially his father, who was an institution in the real estate world and the main character in the Trump household. Then one day young Donald left home to become bigger and greater, eventually becoming the President of the United States. I guess it's safe to say that Trump the Elder would be pretty proud of his son, being commander-in-chief and all.

When I look at ourselves and the incredible support structure we have, like, why don't we have a lot more people like Trump or Trudeau or astronaut Hadfield. Is it because our system, which substitutes for parents for most of our lives, has let us down? Or do we let ourselves down? Why is it that we can't look at ourselves as probably being the most fortunate people on the planet incapable of producing neurosurgeons or those positive role models who are splashed all over the social media and television? Maybe it's time to start grinding at the very basic element that seems to be lacking in our structure – strong parenting.

If we look at Trump today, you can see that he is a product of a strong parent in the way he acts towards the rest of the world. No, you can't cross the border and play in my backyard. No, you can't say those sacrilegious words in my home. No, you can't have a piece of the American pie and eat it too unless you conform to my idea of what the perfect child looks like – a proud American with no affiliation to anything other than milk-textured skin. No chocolate milk in my household… sorry.

I think, that perhaps I could appreciate the hard-earned traditional value of strong parenting if it were acceptable to today's concepts of child rearing. It just doesn't apply to countries though, albeit Canada and the good old USA are just newcomers to the world of nation-building and in all intents and purposes, mere children compared to the longstanding statehoods of Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and the Americas. Maybe it's our turn to say, "No! You can't!" to Donald Trump.

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Under the Northern Sky

Keep our elders with us

by Xavier Kataquapit

I can fluently speak my Cree language and I know how to survive on the land. I owe these skills to the fact that I grew up surrounded by my parents and Elders in my home community of Attawapiskat. How big a deal is this? Well, it makes me who I am as a First Nation person and grounds me or connects me to my people and the land.

Still, this was not enough to assist me in having a life. I had to admit to myself that I had a problem with addictions and I reached out for the necessary knowledge and skills to figure much of that out. Thanks to Alcoholics Anonymous and some good friends who were on the trail of recovery and sobriety, I managed to pick up many useful skills to deal with my addictions.

My Elders played a role in helping me on this trail also and I am forever grateful to them. Being grateful plays a big part in my sobriety because I have to keep reminding myself how fortunate I am to have a good life. When I learned that Mattagami First Nation was making an effort to create a Senior Citizen Multi-Use Complex in their community I immediately connected to how important this type of project is for my people.

As First Nation people, who we are comes from the teachings and guidance of our Elders. Many Native communities across Canada have lost their language and traditions and that means they are losing their way in life. Our First Nations are experiencing so many problems with addictions, abuse, poverty, sickness and suicide. For many of our First Nations, our young people are growing up without those familiar Elders I once knew as they are now passing on or leaving the community for facilities in the south. All their knowledge, skills and experience is being lost and that makes me sad.

Our Elders, many of whom had to endure the horrors of the residential school system, now once again in their golden years have to leave their First Nations to be housed in institutions.

Thankfully, people like Jennifer Constant, Chief Walter Naveau, Juanita Luke and all the council members, staff and Elders of Mattagami First Nation are working to develop a safe, culturally appropriate and active home for their Elders and others from First Nations in the area. Jennifer has been meeting with health professionals on the federal, provincial and local levels to try to put this much-needed home and health service in place.

Right now Elders from the community and other First Nations must be moved out of their familiar home locations to facilities in outside towns and cities. Sadly, this means that our Elders – many of whom had to endure the horrors of the residential school system – once again have to leave their homes to be housed in institutions outside their communities. They must leave their families, friends and familiar settings where they can speak their language, practice their traditions and culture, and socialize on the land.

I am sad that our Elders have to endure this uprooting and move to institutions that cannot possibly make them feel at home in their own space that is culturally appropriate. Our Elders need to be respected and honoured in their final years. Caring for them will assist our First Nations in so many ways. The plan at Mattagami First Nation is to create a culturally appropriate place where our Elders can still be connected to the community and be included in decision-making in terms of their guidance and experience. They also assist our youth in particular with their knowledge of our traditions and culture and of course the language.

The Elders would be associated with the local First Nation school curriculum and play a part in the students' education. They would also be included in the decision-making by chief and council and remain an active part of the community. I urge our federal, provincial and regional government representatives to invest in our First Nations youth and membership in general by moving ahead with this type of Elders' complex. Rather than throw money at outside mental health and social workers, it would make more sense to keep our Elders in their home so that they can help heal our communities.

In the words of Jennifer and her team in Mattagami First Nation, this type of development for our Elders is what reconciliation is all about. It is our opportunity to right many wrongs and to do so with the idea of a healing that only our Elders can provide. Our heads of government need to quit stalling and make this Elders' complex a reality. Keep our Elders with us.

Our heads of government need to **quit stalling** and make this Elders' complex a reality.

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